

# **APPLYING THE SELECTION CRITERIA & LAUNCHING THE EVALUATION REVIEW**

*2012 Social Innovation Fund Evaluation  
Reviewer Orientation Session 3*

# TRAINING OUTLINE

- Social Innovation Fund purpose
- Understanding and applying the 2012 SIF Grant Application Selection Criteria
- The rating scale and point values
- The steps in the application review process
- Reviewer logistical responsibilities
- Q&A

# **WELCOME FROM THE SIF DIRECTOR**

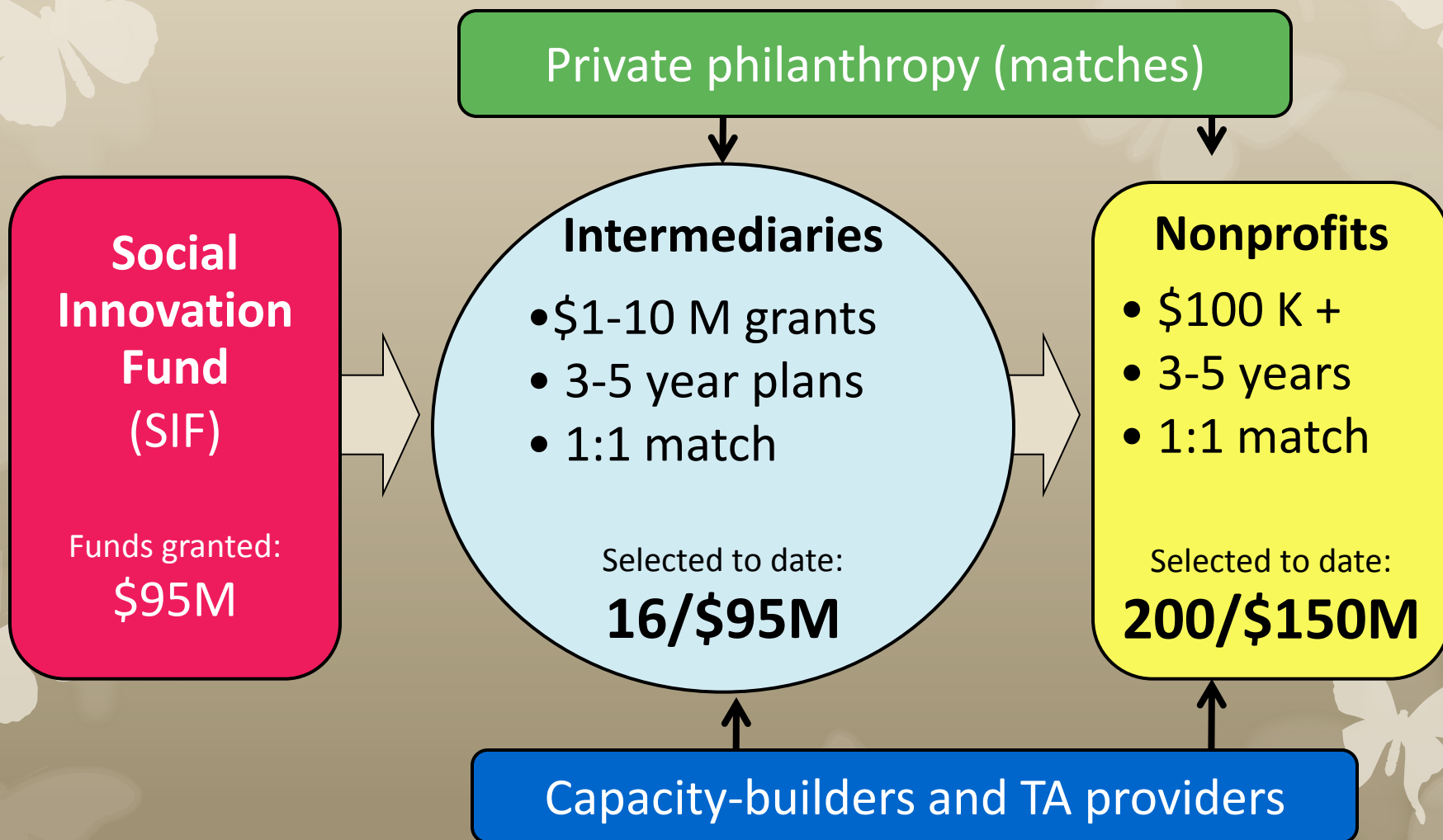
Thank you for being a part of  
the 2012 Social Innovation  
Fund expert review process!

You will play an important role in the  
selection of the 2012 cohort of SIF  
intermediaries.

# THE PURPOSE OF THE SIF

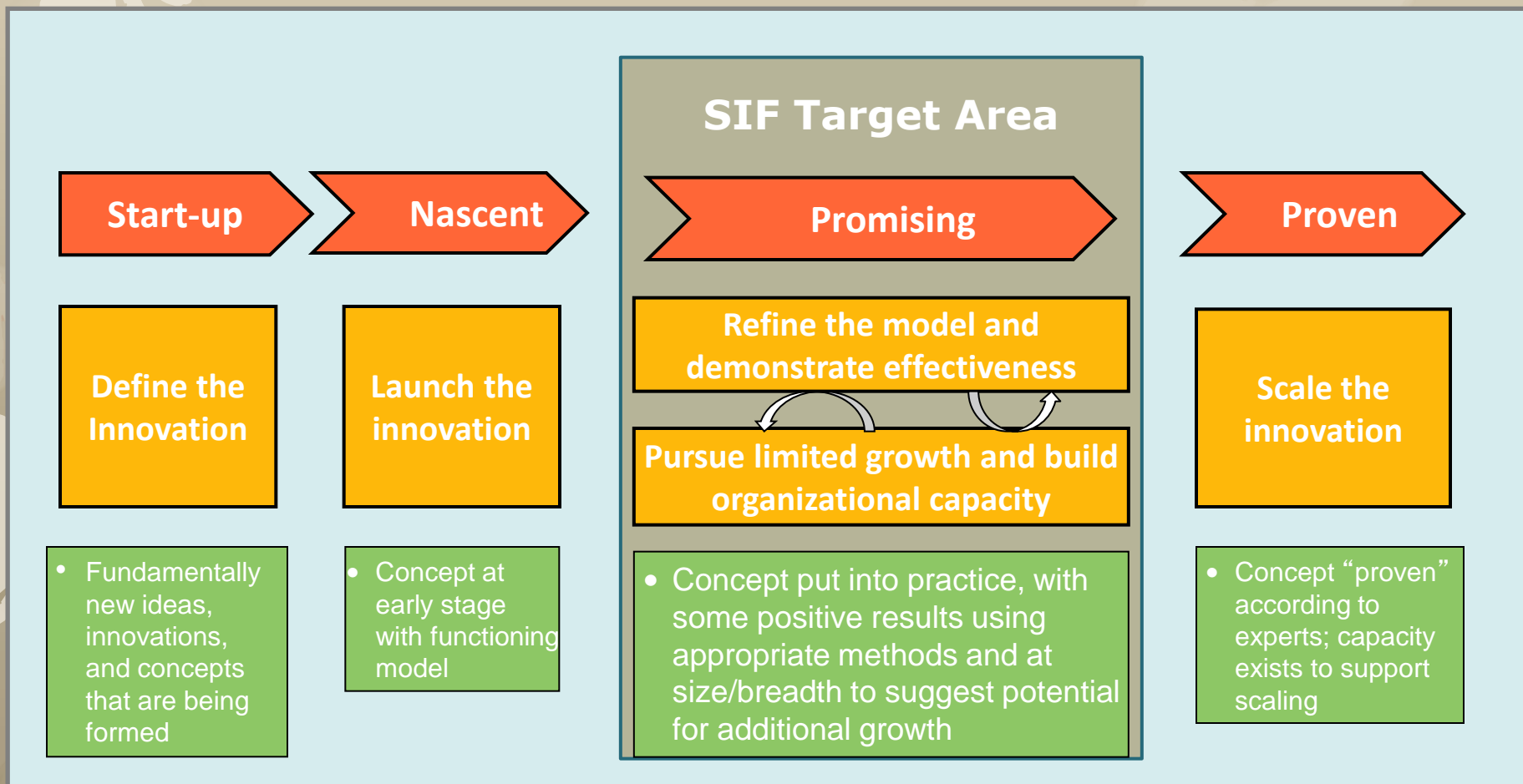
- **The Social Innovation Fund is a bold effort to advance the vision** of widely-accessible, high-impact solutions that help people and low-income communities.
- The purpose of the Social Innovation Fund is to grow the impact of innovative community-based solutions that have compelling evidence of improving the lives of people in low-income communities.
- It mobilizes public and private resources to address three areas of priority need:
  - Economic Opportunity;
  - Youth Development; and
  - Healthy Futures.

# GRANT PROGRAM STRUCTURE



# WHERE SIF FOCUSES ITS WORK

The Social Innovation Fund targets “promising” solutions due to high risks of earlier stages and high funding requirements of “proven” stage.



# ROLE OF EVIDENCE AND EVALUATION IN THE SIF

Reliance on valid evidence is a fundamental tenet of the Social Innovation Fund, which employs evidence and evaluation in two primary ways:

## **1) To select the best intermediaries and subgrantees**

- Intermediaries: previous track records of using evidence to drive impact; Subgrantees: promising program models with at least “preliminary” evidence of results

## **2) To grow the body of evidence about which program models actually work**

- Both intermediaries and subgrantees commit to increase evidence base through rigorous subgrantee evaluation plans for each program model; commitment to achieve “moderate” or “strong”



# SIF EVALUATION: SIF LEVELS OF EVIDENCE

## Preliminary

Evidence from studies that is based on a reasonable hypothesis supported by research findings.

Minimum level of evidence required to receive SIF funding

## Moderate

Evidence from studies that can support causal conclusions but have limited generalizability or studies with high external validity but moderate internal validity.

## Strong

Evidence from studies that support causal conclusions and, that in total, include enough of a range of participants and settings to support scaling up to the state, regional, or national level.

For more information and examples see pgs. 9-10 in the Notice.



# SIF EVALUATION: INTERMEDIARY PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. **Select subgrantees with at least preliminary evidence of effectiveness**
2. **Execute systematic evaluation activities to increase evidence base**
  - Develop an overall ***evaluation strategy*** for their portfolios;
  - Work with subgrantees to develop individual ***subgrantee evaluation plans*** for each funded program model that will measure and increase its evidence base. These plans must be approved by CNCS. ***Implement individual subgrantee evaluation plans and report*** progress and results to CNCS;
  - Provide ***evaluation capacity building and technical assistance*** to their subgrantees; and,
  - ***Collaborate*** with CNCS throughout their grant to review and strengthen their strategies and plans and ensure appropriate implementation and reporting of each plan.
3. **Grow impact of program models through expansion or replication**

# **TYPES OF SIF PROGRAMS YOU WILL REVIEW**

- The Social Innovation Fund is open to and interested in a diverse portfolio
- Applications may come in which vary widely across a spectrum of programmatic approaches

Please remember to base your assessment of each application only on how clearly and convincingly it addresses the selection criteria in the Notice, and avoid comparing applications to one another for this reason.

# TYPES OF EVALUATION PLANS YOU WILL REVIEW

Applications may also come in which vary widely across a spectrum of evaluation strategies

**Model One: Grantee chooses to implement the same (or very similar program model) across all of its subgrantees.**

- Distinct program model that will clearly result in one unified evaluation design for the portfolio; some level of certainty in proposed SIF evaluation strategy

**Model Two: Grantee chooses to create a portfolio which results in several different program models within its subgrantees and each will need to be evaluated separately.**

- Several undetermined program models that will clearly result in several evaluation designs for the portfolio; some level of uncertainty in proposed SIF evaluation strategy

Please remember to base your assessment of each application only on how clearly and convincingly it addresses the selection criteria in the Notice, and avoid comparing applications to one another for this reason.

# 2012 SIF SELECTION CRITERIA

Category	Percent age	Sub-Categories
<b>Program Design</b>	10%	Goal and Objectives
	10%	Description of Activities: Subgrantee Selection
	15%	Description of Activities: Proposal for Evaluation
	10%	Description of Activities: Proposal for Growing Subgrantee Impact
<b>Organizational Capacity</b>	10%	History of Competitive Grantmaking Experience Growing Program Impact
	15%	Evaluation Experience
	15%	Ability to Provide Program Support and Oversight Ability to Provide Financial Support and Oversight Strategy for Sustainability
<b>Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy</b>	15%	Budget Justification Description of Match Sources and Capacity

**Evaluation Reviewers – Grey sections**

**Program Reviewers – All other sections**

# **EVALUATION REVIEW: TWO NARRATIVE SECTIONS**

## **Proposal for Evaluation:**

- ◆ Section II: Program Design
- ◆ Part B: Proposal for Evaluation
- ◆ Value: 15% of Application

## **Evaluation Experience:**

- ◆ Section III: Organizational Capacity
- ◆ Part C: Evaluation Experience
- ◆ Value: 15% of Application

# WHAT APPLICANTS WERE ASKED REGARDING EVALUATION PROPOSALS:

- Describe the maturity of the program models that will be evaluated and the level of evidence these models are likely to have prior to entrance into the Social Innovation Fund program. Subgrantees must have at least preliminary levels of evidence.
- Describe the evaluation strategy for ensuring these models will achieve at least moderate levels of evidence over their three to five year grant period.
- Describe the plan for providing technical assistance to subgrantees to design, implement, and monitor evaluations of their program models. What kinds of assistance will be provided? How will subgrantees' needs be assessed? Who will coordinate and provide this assistance?
- Describe intentions (if any) to work with a contracted evaluation partner to help subgrantees meet Social Innovation Fund evaluation requirements. What qualities and characteristics of a contracted evaluation partner will be required?
- The Social Innovation Fund recognizes at the time of this application actual costs associated with evaluation may be difficult to accurately predict. Please provide an estimated budget covering all evaluation-related activities planned for the three to five year grant period. Present each budget year separately and indicate the major activities and costs associated with those activities (i.e. the cost of staff and/or contractors, travel necessary for design and implementation, technical assistance to subgrantees, and costs for coordinating your portfolio's overall evaluation activities). Please indicate the costs that may be paid at the intermediary and/or subgrantee level.



# **EVALUATION PROPOSAL REVIEW CRITERIA IN NOTICE:**

To what extent did the applicant:

- ◆ Describe anticipated program models that will be evaluated? Do these models have the potential to achieve at least moderate levels of evidence of effectiveness during their Social Innovation Fund grant period of three to five years?
- ◆ Explain how they will assess needs for and provide technical assistance to subgrantees as they design, implement, and monitor evaluations of their program models?
- ◆ If addressed, describe how they will work with an evaluation partner and what activities this partner will do to support the Social Innovation Fund portfolio?
- ◆ Describe an appropriate and detailed budget to support the cost of reasonable evaluation activities that will meet Social Innovation Fund evaluation requirements?



# WHAT APPLICANTS WERE ASKED REGARDING EVALUATION EXPERIENCE

- Describe how the organization has managed and supported evaluations of program models you have funded in the past;
- Describe how the organization has used evidence of program effectiveness to make decisions about your investment strategies in the past;
- Describe how the organization has supported previous grantees in using evidence to improve their program's performance;
- Describe organizational capacity and staff' skills to adhere to the evaluation requirements for the Social Innovation Fund program, particularly regarding the implementation of evaluation designs that will produce moderate or strong levels of evidence; and
- Will additional staff or contractors be hired to support and coordinate evaluation efforts? If so, describe any past experience in managing such efforts.

# EVALUATION EXPERIENCE REVIEW CRITERIA IN THE NOTICE:

To what extent does the applicant:

- Demonstrate experience in managing and supporting evaluations of program models they have funded in the past?
- Demonstrate the capacity to apply evidence/evaluation results to decision- making and investment strategies?
- Have experience influencing and supporting its grantees to use evidence to improve program performance?
- Demonstrate their staff's capacity (or contracted capacity) to ensure successful evaluation of their subgrantees' program models?

# APPLICATION RATINGS

- For each of the Selection Criteria sections, you will assign one of four possible Ratings
  - Excellent
  - Good
  - Acceptable
  - Not Acceptable
- Each Rating has a corresponding numerical point value
- The point value for the two Ratings are added together to develop an overall score for the application

# APPLYING THE RATING SCALE - *EXAMPLE*

- Program Design Evaluation Selection Criteria - Applicant provides a clear explanation how they will assess needs for and provide technical assistance to subgrantees as they design, implement, and monitor evaluations of their program models.
  - Excellent – may include a detailed plan to assess appropriate technical assistance needs and describe an appropriate approach to provide the assistance that was determined
  - Good – may include a plan to assess technical assistance needs and an approach to provide assistance as determined
  - Acceptable – may include some description of a plan where many details of their approach must be inferred by the Reviewer
  - Not Acceptable – may not include any plan to assess and provide assistance, make a vague reference, or lack information

# INDIVIDUAL REVIEWER WORKSHEET (IRW)

- Documents critique of application against the Selection Criteria, not other applications
  - Complete the Applicant Feedback section
- Reviewed by your Panel Coordinator
  - Cut and paste IRW into eGrants
  - Panel members can view each other's IRWs
- Revisit after Panel Discussion (if necessary)
  - Revise Ratings and Comments where necessary, and provide quality check to finalize
- Ensure documentation
  - Hard-copy available in appendices of 2012 Social Innovation Fund Review Handbook
  - Email copy of IRWs to GARP Liaison at end of Review
  - All Review Products must be finalized by **April 30, 2012**

# PANEL DISCUSSION

- Managed and facilitated by your Panel Coordinator
- Conducted via conference call
- Be prepared, with notes, the application, and your IRWs
- Plan for no more than 30 minutes per application
- Opportunity to ask questions and talk through your thoughts
- May present new perspectives that cause you to re-evaluate your original IRW



# YOUR IRW COMMENTS

## ***Reference STANDARDS OF HIGH-QUALITY IRW***

- Application information is limited to the reviewed application (no comparisons with other applications, outside knowledge of the organization, etc.)
- Language is evaluative and appropriate with no suggestions for a “better proposal”
- No inflammatory statements
- Grammar and spelling are correct
- Statements address SIF criteria and do not contradict each other
- Comments are listed and appropriate
- Applicant Feedback Summary section contains balanced appropriate feedback
- Rating selection is aligned with comments for each section



# EXAMPLES OF STRONG IRW COMMENTS

## Evaluation Review:

- The applicant provides descriptions of the evidence that they will be using to select subgrantees and these directly correlate with the definitions in the NOFA. Because the applicant is stipulating that subgrantees must come in prepared to participate in a shared “moderate” level of evidence at the macro-level/overall evaluation (i.e., evidence is quasi-experimental in design, with the use of non-randomized school-level data, matching the project “schools” with other schools not involved in/supported by the project), it can be concluded that they will have potential to reach at least moderate over the three to five year plan. They might be able to achieve stronger evidence, however, if the evaluation was a random assignment or it compared the outcomes of students who participate in the program versus those who do not.
- The applicant does not address how they will assess the needs of each subgrantee in terms of implementing the proposed evaluation strategy. They provide examples of evaluation technical assistance they have provided before, but don’t explain how they might address the diversity of evaluation capacity their portfolio might demonstrate.

# APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

- Select the relevant comments from your Individual Reviewer Worksheet regarding the quality of the applicant's proposed application in response to the selection criteria.
- Copy those comments into the Applicant Feedback Summary section of your IRW.

# CHECKOUT PROCESS

- Finalize all IRWs
- Confirm with your Panel Coordinator that panel responsibilities are met
- Complete Evaluations
  - Evaluate Review Process, and Panel Coordinator
  - The “URL” will be provided via email on the last day of the Review Period – April 30, 2012

# LAUNCH OF EVALUATION REVIEW

## As you begin...

- Ensure your participation in Orientations is verified
- Receive Panel Assignment email
- Applications will be available on Thursday, April 12
  - Review for potential COIs
  - Notify Panel Coordinator and GARP Liaison if COI identified
- Return Signed last page of Participant Agreement and COI forms
  - Submission information located on Forms
- Communicate with Panel to schedule Panel Introduction Call
  - Be flexible and ensure schedule allows for availability

# HONORARIUM INFORMATION

## Reference **PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT**

- Reviewer Honorarium
  - \$1,000 honorarium received
  - Federal employees are ineligible for honorarium
  - Direct Deposit only through the US Treasury
  - Receive an email to provide banking information through eGrants
  - Accuracy is critical



# WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

- Identify and interpret the 2012 SIF Grant Application Selection Criteria
  - Section 4.1.3 – The 2012 Social Innovation Fund Selection Criteria; Notice of Federal Funding Availability
- Understand how to apply the Selection Criteria when reviewing applications
  - Section 4.1.3 – The 2012 Social Innovation Fund Selection Criteria; Notice of Federal Funding Availability
- Discuss the Rating scale and numerical point values
  - Individual Reviewer Rubric

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Opening the phone lines



# CONFIRMATION OF COMPLETION

- To verify that you have completed this module – be sure to email the secret word to [PeerReviewers@cns.gov](mailto:PeerReviewers@cns.gov).

**Thank You**